

## The Importance of the Mormon Trail

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ienced the daily phenomena of public and private well being, and which were produced by natural or human causes. Thus we have of letters and diaries a collection almost adequate to the reading of the record from the earliest territorial days to the present time, from representative hands and hearts. Any history or fiction thus far written of Iowa has its counterpart or essence in the original writings among our manuscript collections, and any that shall be written may be judged from these infallible sources.

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MORMON TRAIL

The editor of the Annals has long been sharply conscious of the importance of the transportation of persons, property, and intelligence within and across our state before the arrival of the railroad and the telegraph. A study of the movements upon the Mormon Trail and its tributaries often discloses curious but interesting facts.

The Census of 1850 is the basis of the following observations:

The listing of products of industry as of the year ending June 1, 1850, for Van Buren County, was made by Charles Baldwin. The townships in Van Buren County served by the Mormon Trail and the Dragoon Trail and tributaries thereto, are shown to have been populated almost to the extent of the population of 1920. There was no railroad in the state. The California gold rush was in its inception. The return of the cultivated land area of that time shows but a fraction of the present area and a yield per acre usually less. The per acre value of improved land was \$10. The labor compensation was per man per day with board, 60 to 65 cents; without board, 75 cents; woman per week \$1.

The return of the products, studied with a view to determine the transportation problems of the time, shows, aside from agriculture, dependent almost solely upon wagon service, the following among other interesting enterprises:

At Pittsburg where a ferry transported a very large share of the travel westward across that county, William Funk had a distillery with an investment of \$500 and converted 2,000 bushels of corn and 200 bushels of rye, with the help of three male em-

ployees costing a total of \$50 per month, into 150 barrels of whisky of the value of \$900. Andrew J. Davis, at his town of Black Hawk opposite Iowaville, both of which towns are now extinct, had an investment of \$24,000 in a plant embracing a flour mill, a sawmill, a lath mill, and a distillery. There was in the year 15,000 bushels of wheat of the value of \$9,000 converted into 3,000 barrels of flour of the value of \$18,000. He converted 50,000 bushels of corn worth \$10,000 and 5,000 bushels of rye of the value of \$2,000, with the help of 12 male employees at the monthly cost to him of \$156, into 70,000 gallons of whisky of the value of \$14,000.

Hordes traveled to the west upon the Mormon Trail to return in considerable numbers as Governor Grimes in effect wrote, "gold-laden." Commerce was all upon this noted trail and its tributaries between Council Bluffs and the Mississippi River.

There was, therefore, to be consumed or transported upon this main artery of travel from Pittsburg, through Troy, Drakesville and to the west, and upon one of the main tributaries from Fairfield, Libertyville, and Iowaville, through Black Hawk to the junction in Davis County with the Mormon Trail, the astounding volume of 14,500 gallons of whisky, or else it was sent by boat upstream into sparse settlements or downstream into the trade territory of Peoria, St. Louis, and Louisville. Adding by inference or ready proof, the volume of other and excess manufactures and agricultural products, the volume of transportation on the Mormon Trail for 1850 is in the ordinary mind established.

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## THE SECOND OFFICER IN THE GOVERNMENT

An interesting and opportune article appears in this edition of the ANNALS on "The Second Officer in the Government," by William H. Fleming. It seems that in case the lieutenant-governorship of our state should become vacant, and should not be filled by appointment by the governor, then in case the governorship should become vacant by death or otherwise, there is no other official in line to succeed him. There is a supposition prevailing that the president pro tem of the Senate would in that case suc-

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